

APPENDIX D. SR 179 SCENIC VIEWPOINTS

SR 179 SCENIC VIEW POINTS

The evaluation of alternative routes in the SR179 Corridor Study of 1991-92 included the selection and evaluation of 17 potential scenic pullouts and viewpoints along the section now in the SRI 79 Design Concept Study. As a result of the Corridor Study, 9 of the sites were selected for development and 8 were dropped.

The primary objectives for scenic pullouts in the SRI79 Corridor Study were as follows:

- Locate sites with the best scenic views within a reasonable distance of the travelway.
- Locate sites that could accommodate necessary parking needs.
 - Select the best sites sites that provided substantially differing scenic vistas.

During the process of the current Design Concept Study, a new scenic pullout was selected south of the Village of Oak Creek at the beginning of the project and the most northerly scenic pullout on the east side of the highway was eliminated due to public concern about its adjacency to a residential subdivision.

One of the sites just north of, and on the west side of the southbound travelway, serves as a replacement for the single formally designated scenic pullout known as Bell Rock Vista which will be eliminated by the new roadways.

The primary objectives for scenic pullouts in the SRI79 Design Concept Study were as follows:

- Locate all parking well off the highway and screened from the traffic.
- Provide bus/RV parking at all sites.
- Design sites to fit in with and enhance access to the Red Rock Pathway.

Lower Jacks Canyon Scenic Viewpoint

Located at approximately Mile Post 304.75, the view provides a wider panorama of the red rock formations than any potential sites to the south and less scenic intrusions than any other site from here to the Village of Oak Creek. There is moderate potential for screening the parking. The site overlooks a riparian vegetation type and affords views across it which would provide spring and fall color primarily due to the presence of some cottonwoods.

Visible are Lookout Mesa, the tip of Castle Rock, Big Park Heights, Bell Rock, Twin Buttes spanning Bell Rock behind it, the top of Wilson Mountain, Courthouse Rock, Lee Mountain and Sunset Mesa.

There are no visual impacts other than highway cut banks on the left edge of the scene. Most of the view is of foreground, with the Castle Rock to Lee Mountain panorama in the background.

Bell Rock/Courthouse Rock Scenic Viewpoint-Northbound

This site isolated about 500 feet to the north of the Village of Oak Creek on the east side of the highway in relatively gentle terrain in a desert grassland setting. It is east of an informal scenic pullout that has formed over the years by public use.

The U.S. Forest Service considers this site as having potential for further development for visitor information facilities. There is sufficient room for a large parking areas that could be fairly well screened from the highway.

The outstanding view is quite different than that from previous sites in that the viewer is nearing the major red rock features and is partially surrounded by them. Big Park Heights, Bell Rock and Courthouse Rock are almost in the foreground zone at this point and loom high on the skyline. The site even allows for an excellent view of Bell Rock and Courthouse Rock from an intimate low spot of barren rock which affords less highway noise and distraction.

Also visible are Castle Rock and Lee Mountain. Sunset Mesa and Lookout Mesa are the only distinctive features to the south, but the view expands to the distant background of the Black Mountain range.

Visual impacts to the south are the urban developments of the Village of Oak Creek. There are also visual impacts to the west of a heavy cable telephone line along the highway. However, most viewing will be directed northward towards the red rock formations.

Bell Rock/Courthouse Rock Scenic Viewpoint-Southbound

This site is located about 500 feet to the north of the Village of Oak Creek on the west side of the highway at the edge of relatively gentle terrain adjacent to interesting small rock outcrops in a pinyon-juniper setting.

There is sufficient room for a parking area that could be fairly well screened from the highway. There is more than one choice for the actual viewing point on top of rock outcrops at this site.

The viewer is near the major red rock features and is partially surrounded by them. Bell Rock and Courthouse Rock are almost in the foreground zone at this point and loom high on the skyline to the north. Also visible are Castle Rock, Big Park Heights, and Lee Mountain. Sunset Mesa and Lookout Mesa are the only distinctive features to the south, but the view expands out to the distant background of the Black Mountain range.

There are slight visual impacts to the east caused by the highway. Visual impacts to the south are the urban developments of the Village of Oak Creek.

Bell Rock Scenic Viewpoint-Northbound

Located on the east side of the highway about 1500 feet north from the base of Bell Rock. At this point the northbound tourist has just passed Bell Rock, become surrounded by rock formations, and has a definite sense of entry or arrival in the Red Rock Country.

This site is on the east side of the highway providing easy access by northbound traffic. There is a considerable amount of room for screened parking as well as an observation point and a trail head for the Red Rock Pathways. It was relocated to the east of the originally selected viewpoint in order to tie in more closely with the Red Rock Pathway. The site provides outstanding views of Cathedral Rock, an enchanting enframed view of the distant Schnebly Hill formation, and Rabbit Ears.

Also visible are Bell Rock, Courthouse Rock, Little Bell Rock, Lee Mountain, Gibraltar Rock, the pass at Chicken Rock with parts of Crimson Cliffs and Munds Mountain in the background, Twin Buttes, Chapel of the Holy Cross, Wilson Mountain, Dry Creek Rim, Capitol Butte Range, Bear Mountain, The Cockscomb, and Big Park Heights.

At present, there is a major visual impact created by the overhead telephone poles and heavy cable.

The site is unsuited as a scenic pullout and viewpoint until such time as the telephone line is undergrounded or removed. Other visual impacts are limited to two mile distant residential developments in the Chapel area and Sky Mountain. Bell Rock Scenic Viewpoint-Southbound

This pullout is located a few hundred feet to the northwest of the only currently developed scenic pullout, Bell Rock Vista, which this viewpoint will replace. At this point the southbound tourist has suddenly come in close contact with the major red rock formations.

This site is on the west side of the highway providing easy access by southbound traffic, but is somewhat limited in size. It provides one of the best viewpoints in the entire area. Red rock views are available in almost any direction. Rabbit Ears Rock at the base of Lee Mountain is visible as is one of the more picturesque views of Cathedral Rock which can be viewed with a distinct spire set out in the center. There is a unique opportunity for a short loop trail up onto broad barren rock slopes of Big Park Heights with even better views.

Also visible are Bell Rock, Courthouse Rock, Lee Mountain, Gibraltar Rock, the pass at Chicken Rock with parts of Crimson Cliffs and Munds Mountain in the background, Twin Buttes, Chapel of the Holy Cross, Wilson Mountain, Dry Creek Rim, Capitol Butte Range, Bear Mountain, The Cockscomb, and Big Park Heights.

Visual impacts are limited to two mile distant residential developments in the Chapel area and Sky Mountain.

Red Rocks Scenic Viewpoint-Northbound

Located on a round hill about 400 feet off the highway the site offers a superior view accessibility.

This site is on the east side of the highway providing easy access and egress by northbound traffic. There is a considerable amount of room for screened parking. It is immediately adjacent to the Red Rock Pathway.

Visible are Bell Rock, Courthouse Rock, Gibraltar Rock, the pass at Chicken Rock with parts of Munds Mountain in the background, The Nuns formation, Twin Suites, Chapel of the Holy Cross, Capitol Butte Range, Bear Mountain, The Cockscomb, Scheurman Mountain, Cathedral Rock and Big Park Heights.

The heavy cut proposed on the north slope of the Roller Coaster and a portion of the new southbound roadway south of the proposed bridge will create moderately heavy visual impacts. Other visual impacts are limited to residential developments on Sky Mountain, and the adjacent Highway 179 and some telephone poles and cables.

Red Rocks Scenic Viewpoint-Southbound

The site is located on a hill about 200 feet off the highway between the two widely separated roadways. The low hilltop offers a superior view in this area.

This site is on a connector roadway between the north and southbound roadways. There is room for screened parking on a gentle slope. Three major components of Cathedral Rock stand out, but the spire in the center is blocked out by the middle component at this angle.

Also visible are Bell Rock, Courthouse Rock, Gibraltar Rock, the pass at Chicken Rock with parts

of Munds Mountain in the background, The Nuns formation, Twin Buttes, Chapel of the Holy Cross, Capitol Butte Range, The Cockscomb, Scheurman Mountain, and Big Park Heights.

Visual impacts will be much greater than present ones which are limited to residential developments Sky Mountain, the adjacent Highway 179 and the telephone poles and cables adjacent to it. The heavy cut proposed on the north slope of the Roller Coaster and a fairly portion of the nearby southbound roadway create heavy visual impacts.

Chapel Area Scenic Viewpoint

Located about 200 feet off the highway on the right, this is the last northbound site along existing Highway 179 on Coconino National Forest land south of the Chapel area that would offer good views. Its location near the north end of the currently proposed Red Rock Pathway increased the importance of this scenic pullout.

This site is on the east side of the highway providing easy access and egress by northbound traffic. There is a considerable amount of room for screened-parking on gentle ground. Two major components of Cathedral Rock stand out at this angle. A view of Chapel of the Holy Cross and The Nuns is superior from this area.

Also visible are Bell Rock, Courthouse Rock, Gibraltar Rock, the pass at Chicken Rock with parts of Munds Mountain in the background, Twin Buttes, the top of Capitol Butte, Cathedral Rock and Big Park Heights.

Visual impacts are limited to residential developments at Sky Mountain, and the adjacent Highway 179.

Oak Creek Overlook Scenic Viewpoint

Located about 200 feet off the highway on Casa Manana ridge, this is the first southbound site along existing Highway 179 on Coconino National Forest land that offers outstanding views. This site is on the west side of the highway providing access only by southbound traffic. There is room for parking on rolling ground which will not be visible from the north.

It offers superior views from the top of a prominent ridge and bluffs overlooking Oak Creek. This location offers the only viewpoint of Oak Creek from Highway 179. The viewer will have a closeup view of the creek about two hundred feet below. It will serve as a substitute viewpoint for several informal ones to the north which will be eliminated by the new roadway. Spring and fall colors of the cottonwoods, ash and sycamore along this wide riparian zone afford tremendous photo opportunities.

Also visible are West Twin Butte, Munds Mountain, Crimson Cliffs, Camelhead, The Thumb, Wilson Bench, Wilson Mountain, Steamboat Rock, Ship Rock, The Fin, Saddle Rock, the top of Capitol Butte, Airport Mesa, Sky Mountain, Cathedral Rock, Big Park Heights, and the top of Courthouse Rock.

Visual impacts include the urban developments of Sedona, a few power poles, and the adjacent Highway 179.

Scenic Pullout Priority Recommendations

<u>VIEWPOINT</u>	<u>PRIORITY</u>
For Northbound Traffic	
Jacks Canyon Scenic Viewpoint on east side at Sta. 490+450	5
Bell Rock & Courthouse Rock Scenic Viewpoint east side NB at Sta. 494+400	1
Bell Rock Scenic Viewpoint east at NB Sta. 496+100	2
Red Rocks Scenic Viewpoint east at NB Sta. 497+500	8
Chapel Area Scenic Viewpoint NB at Sta. 498+650	7
For Southbound Traffic	
Oak Creek Overlook Scenic Viewpoint SB at Sta. 500+750	4
Red Rocks Scenic Viewpoint at SB Sta. 497+300	9
Bell Rock & Cathedral Rock Scenic Viewpoint at SB Sta. 496+350	3
Bell Rock & Courthouse Rock Scenic Viewpoint west SB at Sta. 494+500	6

NOTE: Rated on the basis that 1 is best and 9 is least desirable.